

**Town of Qualicum Beach**  
**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Luke Sales, Director of Planning

**FOR:** Council Meeting, December 7, 2022

**FROM:** Rebecca Augustyn, Planner

**SUBJECT:** Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan – Recommendations from the Select Committee on the Environment and Sustainability

**RECOMMENDATION**

- THAT Council directs staff to update the draft Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCCAP) to state that the Town will prioritize the climate change adaptation objectives in the following order:
  1. Integrate climate change thinking into all planning and decision making.
  2. Improve public health, safety and preparedness to climate-related events.
  3. Effectively manage and support a healthy urban forest.
  4. Continue long-term planning for sea level rise in alignment with Waterfront Master Plan
  5. Continue to prioritize the supply of clean water including: improve coordinated watershed management and planning and increase water conservation practices and policies.
  6. Sustainable Development Policies - Promote and expand the use of Low Impact Development (LID) and Nature-based Solutions (NBS) for building.
  7. Continue to manage invasive species throughout the community.
  
- THAT the following recommendations from the September 21, 2022 memo to the Select Committee on Environment and Sustainability, as attached to the December 7, 2022 Planning memo to Council, be referred to the 2023-2025 Council Strategic Plan and five-year Financial Plan review
  - The recommendations contained in Appendix ‘A’ of that report
  - The recommendations in that report under the heading “RECOMMENDATIONS IN ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABILITY PLAN”;
  - THAT Council adopt an updated Community Climate Change Plan that integrates climate change mitigation and adaptation;

**PURPOSE**

To consider recommendations from the Select Committee on Environment and Sustainability regarding the CCCAP and other climate action initiatives.

**BACKGROUND**

In collaboration with ICLEI Canada and local stakeholders, the Town has developed a draft Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan to build local capacity for climate change resilience and to advance efforts on adaptation.

On January 12, 2022, Council adopted the following motion:

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan be referred to the Select Committee on Environment and Sustainability for consideration

and recommendation to Council on which areas should be prioritized and how best to advance the Town's goals and objectives, in alignment with our Sustainability Plan.

## DISCUSSION

Since the Council resolution on January 12, 2022, the Select Committee has been working through the Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCCAP). On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Committee considered a memo that was prepared by its members for Council consideration. The memo includes a substantial list of recommendations. The recommendation regarding the prioritization of CCCAP objectives can be integrated into the document and brought to Council for consideration of adoption. However, most of the other recommendations in the document have significant financial and resource implications. To ensure that subsequent initiatives are properly scoped and resourced, staff recommend that those recommendations be considered in conjunction with other financial and strategic objectives to ensure that the financial and resource implications can be met.

## SUMMARY

The Select Committee on Environment and Sustainability has prepared a substantial list of recommendations regarding the CCCAP and other sustainability objectives. The recommended prioritization of climate change adaptation objectives is relatively straightforward and can be incorporated into the draft document for Council consideration.

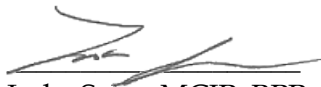
To ensure that subsequent initiatives are properly scoped and resourced, staff recommend that the remainder of the recommendations be considered in conjunction with other financial and strategic objectives.

## ALTERNATIVES

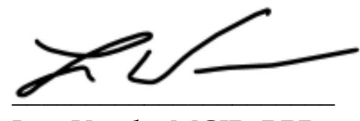
1. THAT Council provides alternative direction to staff.



R. Augustyn, MCIP, RPP  
Planner  
Report Writer



Luke Sales, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning  
Concurrence



Lou Varela, MCIP, RPP  
CAO  
Concurrence

Attachments:

[Climate Change Priorities V3.pdf](#)

[Qualicum Beach CCCAP April 28 2021.pdf](#)

**TO:** **FOR:** Regular Council Meeting, September 21, 2022

**FROM:** The Select Committee on Environment & Sustainability

**SUBJECT:** Response to Council’s direction for the Committee to review the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCCAP) and make recommendations to Council on which areas of the plan should be prioritized and how best to advance its goals and objectives in alignment with the Town’s Sustainability Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Select Committee on Environment & Sustainability recommends to Council

THAT Council adopt an updated Community Climate Change Plan that integrates climate change mitigation and adaptation;

THAT Council refer consideration of the updated Community Climate Change Plan and necessary funding to Strategic Planning and the 2023 budget deliberations;

THAT Council prioritize implementation of the CCCAP Objectives as detailed under “PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CCCAP OBJECTIVES” in this report;

THAT Council implement recommended actions detailed under “RECOMMENDATIONS IN ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABILITY PLAN” in this report; and

THAT Council implement recommended actions detailed in APPENDIX A of this report.

**PURPOSE**

To inform Council of the priorities and recommendations of the committee related to climate change and the Town’s plan for mitigation and adaptation.

**BACKGROUND**

Five years ago, the Town embarked on a process to devise a plan which would identify the impacts of climate change and outline how the community could adapt. In 2020, the consultant released the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCCAP) and in April 2021 the document was circulated by the Town of Qualicum Beach.

Core to the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan is the following:

***Qualicum Beach Vision Statement:***

***Qualicum Beach will proactively adapt and respond to climate change and embrace new opportunities to remain a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable waterfront community. Sustainability planning will be integrated into all spheres of activity using an approach that integrates Indigenous knowledge and values with current science in order to foster inherent resilience to the impact of climate change.***

At its Regular Council Meeting of January 12, 2022, the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCCAP) was presented to Council, and Council referred the CCCAP to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainability (“the Committee”) with requests for recommendations on which areas of the CCCAP should be prioritized and suggestions on how best to advance the Town’s goals and objectives in alignment with the Town’s Sustainability Plan.

The Committee appreciates the opportunity to advise Council on implementation of the CCCAP. The Committee has been committed to preparing a response and has met monthly over the past 6 months in order to review materials, educate ourselves on the issues and provide these recommendations and suggestions to Council.

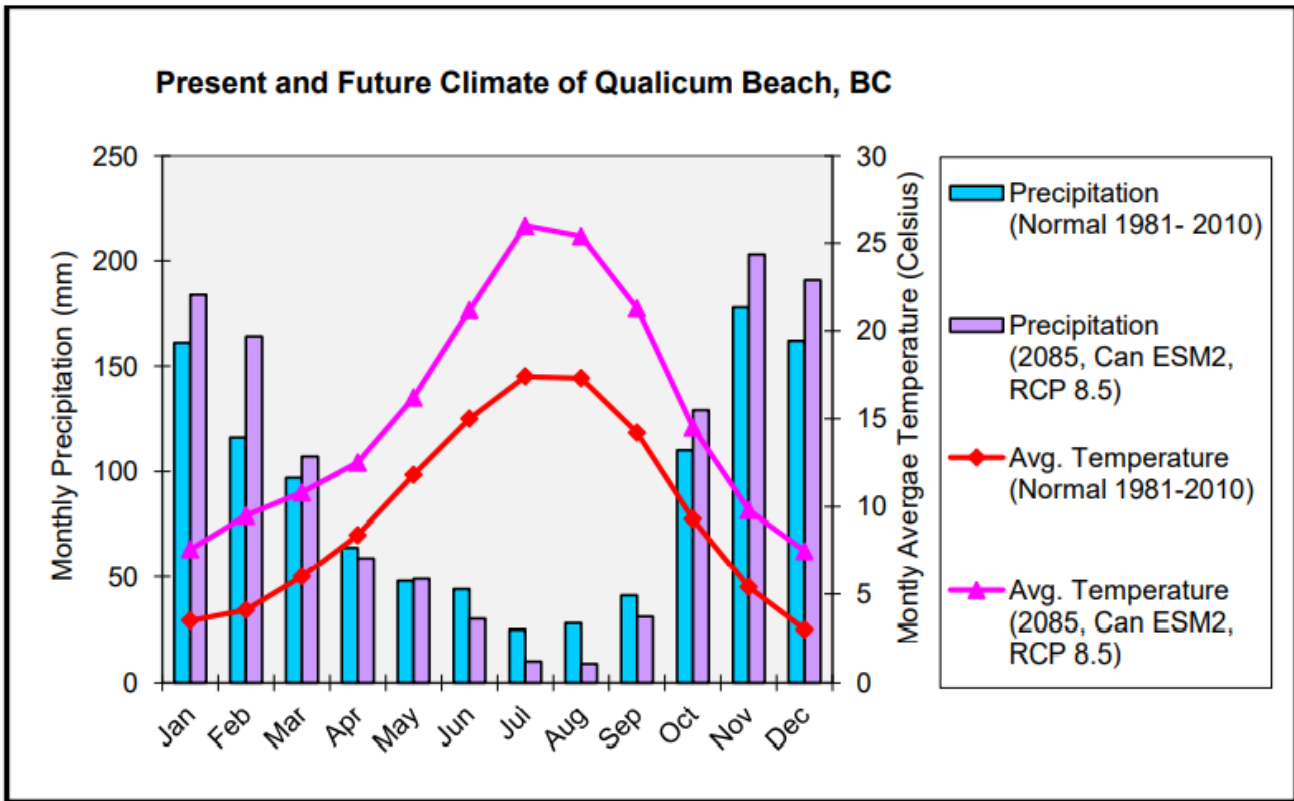
Based on current scientific assessments, we concur with the statement by the Supreme Court of Canada that global climate change represents an “existential threat to human life in Canada and around the world.” While some effects take longer to become evident, such as significant sea level rise, food shortages, and mass climate induced migrations, there is ample of evidence of the impact of climate change already in the form of heat domes, drought, floods, and wildfires. Climate change is no longer an issue of the future. Given the rapid onset of climate change impacts around British Columbia and in our own community, we believe the current iteration of the CCCAP does not reflect the urgency with which the Town must act. We therefore recommend Council view climate change as an extreme and urgent threat to the quality of life, and even to life itself.

We were pleased Council declared a Climate Emergency at its Regular Council Meeting of August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This aligns with the Town of Qualicum Beach’s Strategic Plan which states every decision should be made through the lens of the changing climate.

## **DISCUSSION**

The attached graph highlights the trend in Qualicum Beach towards summers with a combination of significantly reduced precipitation and higher temperatures, with potential to lead to water shortages, elevated wild fire risk, reduced agricultural productivity, and human health impacts. Another salient change is the large increase in winter precipitation which brings increased risk of flooding.

We believe it is imperative that the Town’s focus be on both adaptation and mitigation. While strong and timely adaptation measures are urgently needed to reduce the near term impacts of climate in Qualicum Beach, we note that humanity is on a course towards a magnitude and pace of climate change to which effective adaptation will be largely impossible. For this reason, the highest priorities of a rational response to the climate emergency must be to focus on measures of mitigation and the rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Examples identified of local actions include minimizing emissions from Town operations, phasing out gasoline-powered vehicles and landscape equipment, mandating efficient buildings, promoting installation of heat pumps for heating and cooling, and maintaining and enhancing the Town’s urban forest.



*This graph presents climate data generated by the ClimateBC MAP (web version) spatial climate data tool ([http://www.climatewna.com/ClimateBC\\_Map.aspx](http://www.climatewna.com/ClimateBC_Map.aspx)), showing present and predicted future Monthly Precipitation and Average Temperature. The location for the model is set at Longitude 49.348 and Latitude -124.444. The “present” climate data is based on climate normals for the period 1981-2010. The “future” climate data is generated using the Can ESM2 climate model for the year 2085, assuming atmospheric GHG concentration consistent with IPCC Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5, which is generally consistent with current trends in emissions.*

**PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CCCAP OBJECTIVES**

As per Council’s direction and after reviewing the contents of the CCCAP over the past 6 months, we recommend the CCCAP objectives be prioritized as follows:

**1. Integrate climate change thinking into all planning and decision making.**

We recommend the town start now by focusing on integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation principles into plans, policies, bylaws and decisions as appropriate. This lens should be viewed as a critical component of current planning and integrated into decision making and not as a stand-alone issue for the future.

One area that was identified by the committee as urgent and important is the need for greater Food Security, which also aligns with goals in the OCP. There may be new opportunities because of the changing climate, expanding the role of community and residential gardens and coordination with food banks.

**2. Improve public health, safety and preparedness to climate-related events.**

We place a high priority on the preservation of human life associated with this objective. For example, prioritizing the installation of heat pumps in residential buildings is an adaptation measure to lessen the risk of human mortality due to extreme temperature events, and a mitigation measure to reduce emissions associated due to burning natural gas for space heating.

**3. Effectively manage and support a healthy urban forest.**

With Council's recent adoption of an Urban Forest Master Plan we noted Council's strong and expressed desire to "Proactively Mitigate Wildland Urban Interface Fire Risk at the Community Scale". We see this as part of managing and supporting a healthy urban forest. This is also an integral part of mitigation with value in the capture of carbon.

**4. Continue long-term planning for sea level rise in alignment with Waterfront Master Plan**

We see this as an important long-term objective but it does not have the same urgency in the near term as the first three objectives we have prioritized. We note the town's Waterfront Master Plan will need to be continually updated as new information becomes available. Public education will be an important component of this objective, as it is in all others.

**5. Continue to prioritize the supply of clean water including: improve coordinated watershed management and planning and increase water conservation practices and policies.**

Water would have ranked higher, however, the general consensus of the Committee is that the Town is currently in a good position with the health and management of its well fields. Given the vital importance of clean drinking water, we have ranked it in the top five to ensure it is not forgotten or ignored. Also, we recommend that the Town produce a valuation (in accounting terms) for local watersheds, water retention, water purification, flood control, and cleaner air. Promotion of tap water over bottled water should be an ongoing initiative.

**6. Sustainable Development Policies - Promote and expand the use of Low Impact Development (LID) and Nature-based Solutions (NBS) for building.**

There is much that can be done with green building initiatives as once identified in the Sustainability Action Plan. The Green Laneways project is worthy of further consideration and implementation.

**7. Continue to manage invasive species throughout the community.**

We note this could include new invasive species, both flora and fauna, not yet identified as they adapt to our new climate. Again, public education and involvement in managing invasive species is key, including promoting best practices with, for example, local nurseries, etc.

Please note that by assigning a lower priority to some objectives we do not necessarily believe that these objectives are ultimately less important but, as noted in Objective 4 above, may be less urgent to address right away.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS IN ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

The recommendations of the Committee in response to Council's direction on how best to advance the Town's goals and objectives in alignment with the Town's Sustainability Plan are as follows:

THAT the town adopt in principle the Town of Qualicum Beach Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan, recognizing the need for some revisions and updates including:

- a. acknowledgement of the climate emergency with ensuring a sense of urgency;
- b. acknowledgement of the greater role mitigation should have in the planning for climate change;
- c. adding additional recommendations from the committee on a number of objectives;
- d. update Risk Assessment section to reflect new realities.

THAT implementation of the CCCAP be supported adequately in the Town's strategic planning, budgeting and long-range financial planning.

THAT the Town appoint and appropriately fund the position of Chief Resilience Officer (or a similar official) to oversee the implementation of the CCCAP as soon as possible. A Chief Resilience Officer will work with all town staff and council to integrate climate change into all decisions and future planning and source funding opportunities.

THAT the Town initiate partnerships with various stakeholder organizations and other levels of government including and beyond those identified in the CCCAP to advance the objectives, goals and actions. All levels of government must work together.

THAT a public outreach campaign, possibly including public round tables, be included as part of the implementation of the CCCAP.

THAT the Town's Sustainability Action Plan be updated, including new emission targets.

THAT the Town create pilot projects to demonstrate what success looks like. There are many climate friendly initiatives being undertaken by residents and these stories need to be shared.

## **SUMMARY**

We need to address climate change as the emergency that it is. Council acknowledged this by declaring a Climate Emergency on August 10, 2022. The next step is for Council to assess every decision through the lens of that emergency. This will require a focus on mitigation as well as adaptation, updating risk assessments on an ongoing basis and acting on those new assessments, and involving the community through education and outreach so that the residents of Qualicum Beach are informed and empowered to help meet the challenges of that emergency. The funding and appointment of a Chief Resilience Officer to ensure that the climate emergency is front and centre in the Town's decision making, and that public engagement on this issue is maximized, will be key to the success of the Town's response to climate change.

The climate is changing and so must we in the ways we manage, operate and plan.

## APPENDIX A

### Additional Recommendations from the Committee's Review of CCCAP

The Committee developed the following additional recommendations arising out of our review of the CCCAP.

The Committee recommends to Council:

THAT as a priority, and by December 2023, Town of Qualicum Beach should initiate a program of public awareness about the long term prognosis and implications of Sea Level Rise (SLR) for Qualicum Beach.

THAT by 2027, TQB should revise the Waterfront Master Plan (WMP) to reflect the full range of possible SLR outcomes and the longer time frame (to 2300) as found in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group I, Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC WGI AR6).

THAT by 2027, Town of Qualicum Beach should complete an inventory to identify areas, major structures, infrastructure and natural features at risk under the full range of possible long term SLR outcomes.

THAT the revised WMP should be based on realistic assessment of the limits to adaptation to SLR. At some point of SLR, no adaptation measures will be available to maintain the usability of certain waterfront structures and infrastructure. For this reason, the revised WMP should identify criteria and strategies to implement a "managed retreat" process.

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach should maintain the primary emphasis on "soft" approaches to adapting to SLR.

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach should avoid adaptation measures that involve large greenhouse gas emissions to implement, such as placing large or extensive concrete structures.

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach should recognize that waterfront areas provide high amenity values for the community, and make all reasonable efforts to maintain those values within the limits of the above recommendations.

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach should consider economic and equity aspects of a managed retreat process, including pricing formulae and funding sources for "purchase and demolish" operations.

THAT Council should direct staff to incorporate the principles of the Green Laneway Project into their review of laneways to be brought forward by the end of 2022.

THAT Council should direct staff to research legal mechanisms, including incentives, landscape bonds, or other methods, that could be used to promote the incorporation of Green Laneways and Low Impact Development (LID) and/or their performance objectives into Town planning and development processes.

THAT incorporating the principles of the Green Laneway Project into Town planning and development processes should also be in line with the goals and objectives of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach should initiate a public education campaign to highlight Low Impact Development and its desired performance objectives which might feature examples of local properties that have undertaken such sustainability initiatives.